Report:
Multi Venue Exclusion
Recommendations
August 2016
Foreword

The recommendations in this paper were developed following a national review of the Multi Venue Exclusion (MVE) framework.

The review provided a sector-wide view of the current MVE practices based on a survey of stakeholders. It was led by a project group that included representatives from the Department of Internal Affairs (DIA), the Ministry of Health and the Ministry’s service providers, as follows:

- Pauline Fallon (the Ministry of Health)
- Neove Christoforou (DIA)
- Eru Loach (Problem Gambling Foundation of New Zealand (PGF))
- Lisa Campbell (The Salvation Army, Oasis (SA))
- Alison Penfold (ABACUS counselling, Training & Supervision Ltd)

Key themes that emerged from the findings of the survey were:

- the need for more effective communication and relationships
- issues around enforcement and implementation
- the advantages of more consistent training and processes
- the need for more clarity around roles and responsibilities
- the benefits of upgrading the MVE process to an electronic system with a centralised data base.

An Implementation Working Group that includes industry representatives, DIA, MOH and the Ministry’s service providers has been formed to progress the recommendations.

The full report can be obtained from:

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Recommendations from questionnaire findings

The key themes from the survey show a number of potential areas where amendments to the MVE process can be made to improve its effectiveness and have informed the recommendations below.

National Administrator

The Project Group believe that the creation of a National Administrator role is important to the ongoing success of MVE. The National Administrator role would enable a process for the other recommendations, identified by the key themes from the questionnaire, to be considered and progressed.

This recommendation requires resourcing and the development of a job description. It is envisaged that the National Administrator role would:

- undertake the administrative role of the MVE process
- support the efficient and effective functioning of the MVE Implementation Working Group
- liaise with MVE coordinators as required
- help ensure the systems required for clarity and consistency are set up and maintained
- ensure that stakeholders are kept informed and notifications are current and updated
- manage the regular updating of procedures and guidelines and administration
- facilitate information sharing by acting as a conduit between the stakeholder groups and facilitate constructive inter-stakeholder contact.

Standardisation

Measures to improve the standardisation of the MVE process are needed. Although there is a national framework and guidelines, not everyone is using these consistently and there are no formal systems in place to ensure standardisation. It would be the National Administrator’s role to liaise with MVE coordinators to implement such measures, and to review the MVE process map.

The following suggestions are made:

- standard photo criteria to be revised and maintained by all stakeholders
- standardised forms, processes and procedures to be used by all stakeholders
- national standardised templates to be enforced and training on these to be provided regularly
- standardised of re-entry criteria be developed for gamblers once their exclusion period is completed.

Training

It is important for the effectiveness of the MVE process that all stakeholders carry out their role appropriately and take responsibility for their part in the process. It is suggested that suitable, appropriate and regular training be provided for all sector groups. In addition it is recommended that collaborative training of cross-sector groups be provided as a component of any training package. ABACUS the Ministry’s clinical services trainer would collaborate with the National Administrator to lead training specifically for service providers and to facilitate training for industry groups.

Possible areas suggested for targeted training are:

- regular MVE process orientation for counsellors and a similar type of training for industry
- counsellors/clinical service providers in the appropriate use of MVE as the correct tool for individual clients and circumstances
- venue staff training in the enforcement of exclusion orders – identifying excluded patrons and removing them from venues
- clarity around roles and responsibilities for all stakeholders.
Enforcement of Exclusion Orders

Improvement in the workability of enforcing exclusions is recommended. This is primarily the responsibility of venue stakeholders. Improvements that help venue staff better manage exclusion orders and ensure enforcement exclusions are suggested.

Enforcement of MVE could be aided by:

- improved training for venues on identifying and approaching excluded patrons
- use of monitoring systems by venues along with checks by DIA
- development of the relationship between venue stakeholders and gambling harm providers.

Electronic Upgrade

A national centralised secure database to streamline the MVE process for all stakeholders is recommended. It is also suggested that a solution is found regarding the use of emails to ease the administration burden as well as protect the privacy rights of an excluded gambler. Where possible, the use of technology to bolster enforcement is recommended.

Examples of an electronic upgrade could be:

- using digital photo display technology to identify patrons who have self-excluded
- Incorporating facial recognition technology within gaming areas.

Information and Reporting

A regular information and reporting dissemination function is recommended including clear reporting lines. This function should involve all stakeholders and include clarity around timely information and updates. It will provide an opportunity for quality assurance data for key measures for all stakeholders to be collected, collated and reported. Information and reporting dissemination would be included in the National Administrator’s role.

Information and Reporting could be improved in the following ways:

- sector wide reporting, which could involve statistics, local qualitative case studies for context and a quarterly information newsletter
- development of suitable and appropriate feedback processes.

Governance

The MVE framework has evolved to be jointly led by DIA, the Ministry and representatives of the Ministry’s provider organisations. The day-to-day work has been largely carried out by MVE administrators and coordinators. In response to the survey of the MVE process it is recommended that a new governance framework is developed. Two groups will be established to ensure the MVE benefits from clear leadership structures, an agreed strategic direction and relevant timely advice from the sector. In addition a new role of National Administrator is envisaged, funded by the Ministry.

New MVE Governance Framework

- Governance Group – with representatives from the Ministry and DIA
- Implementation Working Group with experts from the broader sector.
Both groups will have Terms of Reference that set out their respective roles, membership responsibilities and accountabilities. This review outlines their general roles and responsibilities.

**Governance Group**

This group would be made up of two representatives from DIA and two representatives from the Ministry. The MVE programme is largely funded by the Ministry with input for compliance issues from DIA. Two members from each agency will form the MVE Governance Group.

The role of the Governance Group is to:

- support the establishment and maintenance of the Implementation Working Group
- oversee the strategic plan of the Implementation Working Group while allowing the Implementation Working Group to progress agreed initiatives and activities
- provide leadership and guidance to unblock barriers and progress opportunities
- provide direction and feedback to the National Administrator on the progress of work
- make final decisions in areas of funding
- act on the advice and or recommendations of the Implementation Working Group
- identify opportunities to align priorities and initiatives, and better integrate and coordinate plans and activities
- promote communication about MVE to the gambling sector
- ensure the Ministry and DIA’s Executive Leadership and Ministers are appropriately kept informed
- promote and demonstrate collaborative behaviour

**Implementation Working Group**

The new role of National Administrator will sit on this group. The current Project Group\(^1\) will determine the initial composition of the Implementation Working Group, which would likely include:

- the (new role of) National Administrator
- members of the current Project Group
- representatives from industry stakeholders
- representatives from the Ministry’s provider organisations (in addition to PGF and SA)
- representatives from other organisations such as the Health Promotion Agency
- consumer representation

The role of the Implementation Working Group is to:

- develop the Terms of Reference for the Working Group and the Governance Group
- develop a strategic plan that builds on the MVE review report and identifies the outcomes and pathway to achieve improvements in the MVE process
- progress agreed initiatives and activities
- ensure MVE initiatives and activities are robust, feasible and fit for purpose
- provide leadership and guidance to unblock barriers and progress proposals/initiatives
- discuss issues regarding the MVE framework and implementation issues and make decisions as necessary

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\(^1\) Pauline Fallon (the Ministry), Neove Christoforrou (DIA), Eru Loach (Problem Gambling Foundation of New Zealand (PGF), Lisa Campbell (The Salvation Army Oasis (SA), Alison Penfold (ABACUS Counselling, Training & Supervision Ltd)
- reconcile or escalate differences in opinion and approach, and resolve any conflicts arising
- make decisions on technical matters or on points of detail arising that add value
- provide timely advice and make recommendations to the Governance Group
- provide necessary skills, experience, and knowledge to guide and influence improvements to the MVE process
- highlight capability gaps that might arise in the short and long term and resolve or escalate to the Governance Group
- refer issues of funding and additional resource to the Governance Group
- respond promptly to any requests sought by the Governance Group
- promote and demonstrate collaborative behaviour.

**Conclusion**

The MVE in New Zealand is a relatively new system and one that has evolved gradually from a regional programme to national distribution. Information gathered through the review process from service users indicates that the availability of MVE can be a valuable tool for preventing and minimising gambling harm. This finding is backed up by international research.

This review of how the scheme is working provides information that has been used to develop a set of recommendations that will help improve the MVE process and its implementation. At the heart of the recommendations is the development of a new governance structure which, with the advent of a dedicated national administrator role, is seen as an important step forward in the effectiveness of the MVE framework.

There is opportunity now to build collaboration and foster partnership among MVE stakeholders, to adopt the recommendations and to use them as the starting point for further improvements that will be part of the future.